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United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Prepared by  
Food Safety  
and Quality  
Service

# Food News for Consumers

February 1981

## USDA's Food Safety and Quality Service:

- Inspects and analyzes domestic and imported meat, poultry, and meat and poultry products;
- Establishes ingredient standards and approves recipes and labels for processed meat and poultry products;
- Inspects and analyzes liquid, dried, and frozen egg products;
- Establishes grade standards for fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy products, and provides grading services for these foods on request;
- Monitors the food industry for violations of inspection and grading laws; and
- Buys food for the USDA school lunch program and other food assistance programs.

## Improving the FSQS Label Review Program

It's no accident that the labels on meat and poultry products are truthful, accurate, and not misleading. The inspection laws require that every new or changed label must be approved by FSQS before it may be used. In 1980, FSQS headquarters handled over 100,000 labeling applications.

FSQS has been working to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its label review program. The agency is in the process of streamlining its procedures without changing the essential consumer protection label review provides.

The agency launched a pilot project Dec. 1, 1980, to test shifting some label review responsibilities from Washington, D.C., to the field. Three meat and poultry inspection areas were selected to participate in the voluntary, four-month program. They are: Missouri; Kentucky; and the Hyattsville, Maryland, area which includes Maryland, Delaware, and Washington, D.C. Plants in these areas may elect to have their USDA inspectors-in-charge review certain simpler kinds of labels, such as labels of products made from one ingredient only, and any final labels that are consistent with sketches previously approved by FSQS headquarters in Washington. Public comments on this program will be accepted until Feb. 23.

Another major action taken by FSQS will provide the public with greater access to information about the label review program. On Dec. 29, 1980, the agency announced a new policy of issuing memoranda describing significant or new interpretations of meat and poultry labeling laws, regulations, or policies. Copies will be available to the public, and the Federal Register will



Labels  
continued

periodically publish notices listing recent decisions. For more information: Press Release #3055-80 (11-26-80).

Comments on the shifting of label review responsibilities should be sent by Feb. 23 to regulations coordination division, attn: Annie Johnson, rm. 2637-S, FSQS, USDA, Washington, D.C., 20250. For further information, contact Joan Moyer Schwing, deputy director, meat and poultry standards and labeling division, FSQS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. Phone: (202) 447-4293. Press Releases #2028-80 (10-20-80) and #88-81 (1-22-81).

## Happy Anniversary

75th  
Anniversary



USDA's meat inspection program will be 75 years old on June 30. It was established back in 1906 when President Theodore Roosevelt signed into law the Meat Inspection Act--one of the first major consumer protection measures ever passed by Congress.

The legislation provided for federal inspection of red meat products to be shipped in interstate and foreign commerce. It required that animals be examined before and after slaughter and that processed foods be checked for harmful additives. It established sanitation controls within plants and called for the examination of all labels for truthfulness and accuracy.

Information kits will soon be available with more material about the anniversary and the Department's meat and poultry inspection program as it is today. To order a kit, write or call any of the Regional Information Offices listed on page 15 of this newsletter.

## Update on Food Grading

FSQS currently is analyzing more than 1,200 public comments and studying the economic impact of possible changes in the food grading system. Last May the agency invited public comments on five options for changing food grade names after an FSQS survey showed consumers don't use grades because they don't

### How to Obtain Free Copies

Single free copies of press releases, Federal Register reprints, studies, fact sheets, and publications mentioned in the FSQS section of this newsletter are available from regional information offices across the country (see page 15) or from FSQS Information, Room 3606-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. Phone: (202) 447-5223.

### Where to Send Comments

Send your comments on proposals in the FSQS section to: Regulations Coordination Division, Room 2637-S, FSQS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. Usually two copies are requested. Be sure to identify the proposal you are commenting on by referring to the title of informal proposals or, for formal proposals, the date of publication in the Federal Register.

### Tips on Writing Comments

For tips on how to give your comments more weight, write for the FSQS brochure called "Public Participation: Getting Involved in FSQS" (June 1980).

Update  
continued

understand them. In addition to the 1,161 written comments received by FSQS, 82 people testified and 500 people attended three public hearings in Ames, Ia; St. Petersburg, Fla.; and San Francisco, Cal. Nearly 75 percent of the commenters were individual consumers. Other commenters include educators, state and local government officials, nutritionists, home economists, extension agents, trade organizations, processors, packers, and producers.

If you would like to be kept informed about the progress of this project, write: Public Participation, Rm. 1168-S, FSQS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

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## **Enforcing the Laws**

The following are some recent actions taken by FSQS to protect the nation's food supply.

### **mislabeled beef**

On Oct. 16, George Wollman, Inc., a meat processing establishment in Westville, N.J., was fined \$1,000 in U.S. District Court, Camden, after pleading guilty to preparing, transporting, and selling to a Pennsylvania meat processing plant approximately 39,000 pounds of mislabeled beef product in December 1979. The product was labeled "sirloin trimmings" when in fact it was "flank meat trimmings," a less expensive item.

### **mislabeled chopped beef**

Century Service and Warehouse, Inc., a meat brokerage firm in Cerritos, Cal., and Harold M. Low, the firm's president, were sentenced on Oct. 21, 1980, in U.S. District Court, Los Angeles, for violating the Federal Meat Inspection Act. The firm was fined \$10,000 after it pleaded guilty to fraudulently selling approximately 40,000 pounds of "partially defatted beef fatty tissue" that had been relabeled "partially defatted chopped beef." Low was fined \$1,000 and given a one-year suspended jail term after he pleaded guilty to selling the mislabeled product. In addition, he was sentenced to three years' probation with the condition that he contribute 300 hours to voluntary community service. FSQS Release 11-6-80.

### **adulterated beef patties**

On Nov. 3, 1980, Pemiscot Packing Co., Inc., Wardell, Mo., was fined \$1,000 in U.S. District Court, St. Louis, after pleading guilty to selling adulterated ground beef patties in Aug. 1978. Laboratory analysis showed the patties contained sodium sulphite, a chemical preservative that masks the normal discoloration of aging and spoiling meat. FSQS Release 11-13-80.

### **meat inspection withdrawn**

On Dec. 1, 1980, USDA withdrew meat inspection service for two years from Blu-Sal Meats, Inc., a meat packing plant in the Hunts Point Cooperative Market, Bronx, N.Y., because of felony convictions against the firm and two of



## Enforcing the Laws continued

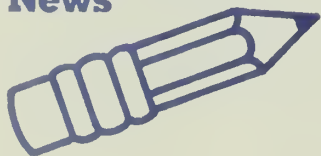
its officers. The consent decision withdrawing the service also ordered Shelton Blumhof, the firm's president, to completely separate himself from the firm, otherwise inspection service would be withdrawn for an additional three years. Without federal inspection, products cannot be moved across state lines.

In 1979, the firm, Blumhof, and Howard Saltiel (the firm's secretary-treasurer) were convicted of fraudulent dealings involving food stamp coupons. The firm was fined \$25,000. Blumhof was fined \$10,000, sentenced to six months in prison, and placed on three years' probation. Saltiel was sentenced to six months in prison. Press Release #2058-80 (11-5-80).



If you have a question or a problem with the safety or wholesomeness of a meat or poultry product, the truthfulness of its labeling, or the accuracy of a grade name, contact FSQS Consumer Inquiries, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call (202) 472-4485.

## Other FSQS News



USDA extends comment period on strawberry standards to September 30, 1981. Press Release #2036-80 (10-31-80).

USDA proposes standards to accredit private laboratories. Press Release #2066-80 (11-6-80).

USDA extends comment period on standards for canned fruits. Comment period ended Dec. 12. Press Release #3031-80 (11-21-80).

USDA reduces meat production reporting. Press Release #3033-80 (11-21-80).

USDA raises fees for meat grading. Press Release #3034-80 (11-21-80).

Public comments on poultry and egg regulations due by Jan. 21. Press Release #3035-80 (11-21-80).

Public meeting on nitrites to be held Jan. 22. Press Release #3079-80 (12-2-80).

Comment period on PCB proposal extended to March 4. Press Release #3080-80 (12-2-80).

USDA proposes new hexagon-shaped mark to identify imported horsemeat. Press Release #3138-80 (12-12-80).



FSQS News  
continued



USDA to realign structure of meat and poultry inspection forces. FSQS Release (12-12-80).

USDA says draw a poster and help fight the food spoilers. FSQS Release (12-12-80).

USDA announces food safety poster contest. Press Release #3146-80 (12-15-80).

USDA allows El Salvador's meat shipments to enter U.S. Press Release #3167-80 (12-17-80)

USDA to buy ground beef with soy for school lunch program. Press Release #3172-80 (12-18-80).

65 USDA employees to receive cash bonuses for outstanding performance. Press Release #3197-80 (12-23-80).

USDA increases inspection fees for fresh fruits and vegetables. Press Release #3203-80 (12-29-80).

USDA to increase grading and inspection fees for poultry and egg products. Press Release #3215-80 (12-31-80).

USDA proposes use of fumaric acid in meat and poultry products. Press Release #3216-80 (12-31-80).

Court order voids parts of USDA standards for country ham. Press Release #14-81 (1-6-81).

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## What's New from FSQS

consumer inquiries



all about FSQS

quality control

See box on page 2 to order any of the following new materials from FSQS.

A fact sheet explaining where and how to place an inquiry or a complaint in FSQS. Lists areas in which FSQS can be of help, and additional sources of information to use for questions or complaints outside our area of responsibility. Ask for FSQS-47 (December 1980).

Describes the role of the agency, listing responsibilities such as grading, meat and poultry inspection, food purchasing, and FSQS science and compliance functions. Ask for FSQS-9 (December 1980).

This fact sheet describes the quality control inspection system for processed meat and poultry products. Explains how it was developed and how it's used today. Ask for FSQS-46 (October 1980).



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# Agricultural Marketing Service

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## USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service:

- Gathers and disseminates current information on prices, supplies, and other market data;
- Provides cotton and tobacco standardization, inspection, grading, and testing services on request;
- Administers several regulatory programs designed to protect producers, handlers, and consumers from careless, deceptive, or fraudulent marketing practices;
- Administers marketing agreement and order programs to help establish and maintain the orderly marketing of milk, fruits, and vegetables;
- Provides patent protection to developers of certain novel plant varieties; and
- Monitors industry-sponsored and -financed research and promotion programs.

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## New Wheat Industry Council Meets



The new Wheat Industry Council held its first meeting in Washington, D.C., Nov. 18 and 19, 1980. The council will administer a national research and nutrition education program for wheat and wheat foods, seeking ways to improve the quality of wheat and encourage more efficient use of wheat in the American diet. The program is funded by assessments on processed wheat bought by certain manufacturers of products such as bread, cake, cookies, cereal, or pasta.

The council consists of 20 members and 20 alternates who represent end-product manufacturers, processors, producers, and consumers. Members and alternates were named on November 7, 1980. They will serve staggered terms.

The new wheat program is authorized under provisions of the Wheat and Wheat Foods Research and Nutrition Education Act passed by Congress in 1977. The order outlining operation of the program was approved in a referendum of wheat end-product manufacturers, primarily wholesale bakers, in March 1980.

For more information: USDA Press Releases #2069-80 (11-7-80) and #3037-80 (11-21-80) which are available from the regional information offices listed on page 15.

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## Food Forecast for February

Orange and grapefruit juice, pork, broiler-fryers, milk and dairy products, fresh winter pears, raisins, dried prunes, rice, dry beans, and dry peas should be in plentiful supply during February, according to USDA's Food Marketing Alert issued January 21.

The Florida freeze has reduced that state's supplies of fresh oranges and grapefruit and has adversely affected quality. The state's embargo of fresh



## Food Forecast continued

citrus shipments for 10 days beginning January 18 may result in reduced availability of these fruits during early February. However, fresh oranges and grapefruit should still be in adequate supply--enough to meet normal needs--since California is producing a record crop of navel oranges, and Florida's orange crop, though hurt by the freeze, was large this season.

Because heavy quantities of Florida citrus fruit are being processed into frozen concentrate and chilled and canned juice, there should be a plentiful supply of citrus juice during the month.

Although February pork production is expected to dip seasonally, 5 to 7 percent below the record high rates of last February, supplies should still remain large. There also should be a plentiful supply of broiler-fryers, with production rates 8 to 10 percent above the 1978-80 average for the month.

During February, there should be adequate supplies of beef and turkey. Weekly beef production rates for the month will be close to the rates of last February and will be 6 to 8 percent below the 1978-80 average for the month. Overall turkey supplies are forecast at 6 to 12 percent below a year earlier.



The 1980 raisin crop was 2-1/2 percent above the 1979 crop and the largest since 1943. The 1980 dried prune crop was the largest since 1973. Both commodities will be in plentiful supply.

During February, there should be adequate supplies of these major processed vegetables: canned sween corn, tomatoes, lima beans, snap beans and green peas; and frozen lima beans, carrots, sweet corn, green peas, snap beans and spinach. Fresh potatoes, frozen french fries and frozen potato products, and onions also should be adequate.

Supplies of fresh broccoli, cabbage, celery, and lettuce will be adequate. Some fresh vegetables, including snap beans, sweet corn, eggplant, green peppers, and tomatoes, will likely be in light supply--that is, not sufficient for normal needs--because of the January freeze in Florida.

Peanuts will be in light supply during February. The 1980 crop was the smallest since 1964. Some imports during the month may augment the supply.

Rice, dry beans and peas will be plentiful during the month. The 1980 rice crop set a record--10 percent above 1979 and 19 percent above the 1977-79 average. The 1980 dry bean crop was 27 percent above the 1979 crop and 40 percent above the 1977-79 average; while the dry pea crop was 61 percent above 1979 and 48 percent above the 1977-79 average.

Monthly issues of Food Marketing Alert--along with special issues that cover certain foods that are in temporary oversupply in the marketplace--are distributed to the news media. Consumers should watch for this information in newspaper food pages, consumer broadcast programming, and Cooperative Extension Service bulletins.

USDA also distributes Food Marketing Alert to people who communicate with consumers, but not to individual consumers. For a sample copy and order blank, write: Information Division, AMS, Rm. 3086-S, USDA., Washington, D.C. 20250.

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# Economics and Statistics Service

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## USDA's Economics and Statistics Service:

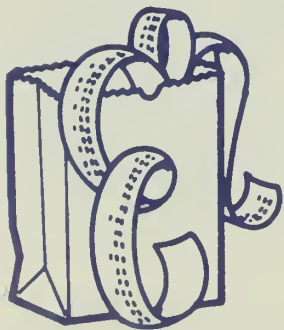
- Gathers and provides information on the agricultural economy;
- Analyzes international activities of agricultural significance;
- Does research on commodities, food and nutrition, natural resources, and rural development; and
- Furnishes timely and objective economic and statistical information to farmers, other rural Americans, industries, consumers, and policy-makers.

## Food Prices to Rise Further

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USDA's prediction of year ago was for 1980 food prices to rise between 7 and 11 percent. They actually rose 8.6 percent. The 1981 forecast is for a steeper rise of 10 to 15 percent, with 12 percent perhaps most likely.

The good news was that the 1980 rise, the smallest since 1977, trailed the general inflation rate, meaning that food prices were in one sense a bargain. The bad news is that the 1981 rise is liable to outpace the general inflation rate.



Why? Drought cut deeply into U.S. crop output in 1980, at the same time some other important producing countries also had short crops. Export demand for our farm products has escalated. Farmers are growing fewer cattle and hogs for market, too. Rising feed costs and poor pasture conditions have choked off profit opportunities. So there is a projected 18 percent rise in prices at the retail meat counter, and consumption per person is slated to decline for the fifth straight year.

Food prices might not rise as much as portrayed, if

- Crop growing weather in 1981 is notably better, and meteorologists say there's one chance in 20 it won't improve; and
- The general inflation rate doesn't worsen beyond expectations.

Two recent indicators offer hope: Farmers have planted the most wheat acreage on record for harvest next summer and they are apparently cutting back on hog production much less than indicated earlier.

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### **No-frills Stores Draw Chain Reaction**



Those no-frills, limited-assortment stores springing up around the country sell food cheaper and force nearby competitors to give consumers better breaks, too. At least that was happening for stores USDA economists studied last spring in the Nation's Capital area.

Indexes showed the new stores' prices 25 percent or more below those of existing chains lumped together. But chain outlets near where the new "no-frills" stores had opened were pricing their foods lower than their outlets elsewhere. Moreover, all the chains studied made some responses to the new competitors. They all stepped up their advertising, some started redeeming coupons at double face value, and several introduced consumer games as a competitive tactic. One opened its own version of a limited-assortment store.

So, while the newcomers on a national basis are earning less than 2 percent of total food store sales so far, they are triggering reactions by existing stores, to apparent consumer benefit.

### **Oh, about that New Year's Resolution to Lose Weight**

A lot of us try. In 61 percent of households sampled in a recent USDA survey, someone tried to lose weight in the past year. In 29 percent of the surveyed households, all members attempted to lose weight. Most dieters were females in the 35 to 49 range, as were males who dieted too. Also, the higher the household income, the higher the reported incidence of dieting.

Weight control is a prominent factor in food choice. In 43 percent of households that had made a change in food use in the past 3 years for health or nutrition reasons, a reduction in calorie intake--controlling weight gain--was cited for making at least one change.

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## **Food and Nutrition Service**

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USDA's Food and Nutrition Service administers:

- The food stamp program;
- The national school lunch and school breakfast programs;
- The special supplemental food program for women, infants, and children (WIC); and
- The food distribution, child care food, summer food service, special milk, and food service equipment assistance programs.

### **Summer Food Program Needs Sponsors**

USDA is looking for qualified public or nonprofit private agencies to sponsor the summer food program. Under this program, qualified sponsors get federal payments for meals served to children in needy areas.

The summer food program provides meals to children in needy areas during extended school vacation periods. It operates during the summer or during any



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## Summer Food continued

school vacation of at least 3 weeks for schools with a continuous school year calendar.

Meals and snacks are served to children in such places as churches, schools, playgrounds, and parks. Sponsors get training and technical assistance to start and operate the program.

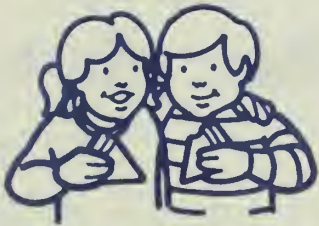
### can you be a sponsor?

If your organization is a public or private nonprofit, nonresidential institution, or residential summer camp, you could be eligible to sponsor the summer food program. Typically, sponsors are city government agencies, churches, schools, social service organizations, residential summer camps, and similar organizations.

To find out more about being a sponsor, contact the education department in your state or Mary Lou Wheeler, Summer Food Service Program, FNS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. Phone (202) 447-9072.

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## New Rules Issued for Summer Food Program



USDA has issued new rules to improve management of the summer food program. The new rules require states to set a limit on the number of meals served at sites where the food is prepared by food service management companies. Using previous attendance records, states will set a limit on meals served, and this should help reduce the number of excess meals claimed for reimbursement.

The new rules also set the annual audit requirement for sponsors of the program to those receiving \$75,000 a year in program payments. Previously, the limit had been set at \$50,000. This change eliminates unnecessary audits of sponsors who have experienced minimal growth over the past few years. The regulations were published in the Federal Register on Jan. 21.

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## Food Stamp Work Requirement Strengthened

New regulations recently published by USDA and the U.S. Department of Labor will require able-bodied food stamp users to actively search for jobs or be dropped from the program. Under the new rule, food stamp users must look for a job on their own and report for interviews at state employment offices. If they don't, their households may be dropped from the program for two months.

Exempt from the requirement are the elderly and disabled, those responsible

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Work Requirement  
continued

for the care of dependents, those already working, and those registered for work under the unemployment insurance and work incentive programs.

The work registration and job search requirements were published in the Jan. 16 Federal Register. They will become effective June 1.

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**\$15 Million  
Apportioned**

FNS has allocated \$15 million to the states for nutrition education and training for fiscal year 1981. States will use the grants to develop and carry out nutrition education and training in schools. Children, teachers, and school food service personnel will participate. The funds made available for each state and territory amount to about 30 cents for each child enrolled in schools and child care institutions.

For additional information on the nutrition education and training program write: Nutrition and Technical Service Division, FNS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

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**Optional Food  
Stamp Reporting  
System Proposed**

State agencies with the necessary computer capabilities may be able to match food stamp benefits more accurately to households' changing circumstances, under a recently proposed income reporting system.

The new system would allow states to issue benefits based on monthly reports of participants' actual past income. It is designed to help states reduce error rates.

Under the proposed system, a household would mail in reports of its income, deductions, and household circumstances for a prior month. The state would then use these figures, rather than information about a household's current and future circumstances, to determine the eligibility and benefit level.

Also under the proposed system, states would continue to use a household's current circumstances to determine its eligibility and benefits for the initial months the household is on the program. After the first months, benefits would be based on the food stamp household's actual income and circumstances for a previous month.

The proposed system would be optional because not all states have the computer technology and management systems necessary to operate the system.

Next year, FNS will test the impact of this income reporting system on

Reporting System  
continued

administrative costs and procedures, benefit levels, error rates, and client services through a demonstration project in two Illinois areas--Peoria County and the Southeast local office of Cook County (Chicago). Proposed regulations on the system were published in the Federal Register on Dec. 5, 1980.

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## Science and Education Administration

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### USDA's Science and Education Administration:

- Plans and coordinates food and agriculture research, extension, and teaching efforts;
- Conducts federal research programs in the food and agricultural sciences;
- Communicates and demonstrates agricultural research results;
- Provides information and expertise needed by policy, regulatory, and action agencies of USDA and other federal departments; and
- Provides information systems and library services in the food and agricultural sciences.

### Nutritionists Study Fast-food Fats

Millions of Americans eat at fast-food outlets every day, which is one of the reasons USDA nutrition scientists decided to do a study of foods served at these outlets. The study focused on fats, because nutritionists as well as the public are increasingly interested in food fats.

Analyses showed that composition of simple sandwiches such as hamburgers and cheeseburgers may be substantially different from composition of specialty sandwiches. For example, a Burger King hamburger provides 270 calories and 40 milligrams of cholesterol (averaged figures); the Burger King Double Beef Whopper provided 662 calories and 175 milligrams of cholesterol. Condiments on some specialty sandwiches can add considerably to the calorie intake. For example, the amount of mayonnaise normally added to a Burger King Whopper has 159 calories; the amount of McDonald's special sauce in a Big Mac has 105 calories; and the amount of tartar sauce in a Burger Chef Skippers Treat has



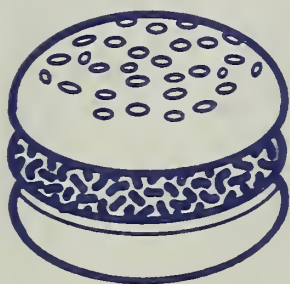
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## Fast Foods continued

81 calories. Desserts did not vary as much in nutrient composition as the sandwiches.

Reliable data on the fats people eat are not easy to get. Even if data are available on the nutrient content of foods people buy, it is difficult to relate that to what they actually eat because there is so much variation in food preparation methods, eating habits, and portions of meals thrown away.

So-called "fast foods" offer a unique opportunity for collection of data on foods as eaten. The large chains standardize their products, which controls amounts and ingredients. In the hamburger-type outlets the entire serving is edible, which minimizes statistical problems caused by variation in eating habits.



The volume of sales in fast food chains is another factor that makes such data statistically valuable. It is estimated that the three fast-food chains from which samples were purchased for the USDA study--Burger Chef, Burger King, and McDonald's--provide about 1 percent of all the food eaten in the United States.

The USDA study is believed to be the most comprehensive ever done of nutrients in fast foods. Fifty items including sandwiches, french fries, onion rings, shakes, and desserts were analyzed.

Complete data are available from the Information Office, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville, Md., 20705.

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## Make Your Own Solar Food Dryer

If you have the usual assortment of homeowner hand tools and \$14 to buy materials, you have the basic necessities to build a solar fruit and vegetable dryer developed in cooperative USDA-Department of Energy research.

Construction materials include wood for the frame, string, aluminum foil, and glue. The dryer weighs less than 15 pounds, and is easy to put together with hand tools.

An unusual feature is a curved mirror that concentrates radiation from the sun just enough to dry fruits and vegetables but not enough to overheat or burn them. Peaches, mangos, green peppers, onions, mushrooms, plantains, grapes, and other produce can be preserved. Some products need pretreatment such as blanching or slicing.

Free illustrated directions for constructing the solar dryer, along with information on pretreatment, are available from the U.S. Citrus and Subtropical Products Lab, SEA, USDA, PO Box 1909, Winterhaven, Fla. 33880.

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## **Yield of Trimmed Meat Compared in Beef Study**



A 1-pound sirloin cut from a Prime-quality carcass has a thicker layer of fat than a 1-pound sirloin cut from a Standard-quality carcass; the Standard cut has more bone and connective tissue.

Question: After trimmable fat, bone, and connective tissue are cut away, which sirloin weighs the most?

Answer: They'll weigh about the same.

The answer would also be the same if the cut were made from Choice or Good carcasses, and if cuts other than sirloin were compared.

USDA scientists at the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center in Maryland studied the effect of beef quality grade on yield of trimmed meat. They define trimmed meat as muscle plus marbling, or intramuscular fat. The study was a cooperative project between USDA and the National Livestock and Meat Board.

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## **USDA Takes over Food Irradiation Research**

USDA now has responsibility for research that will determine whether consumers some day can buy foods preserved by irradiation.

Research begun by the Department of the Army on use of irradiation as a means of preserving food was taken over by USDA on October 1, 1980. The studies are now conducted at USDA's Eastern Regional Research Center, Philadelphia.

Studies on high-dosage irradiation of chicken products are now under way. If wholesomeness and over-all acceptability of irradiated chicken is confirmed, USDA could request that the Food and Drug Administration approve marketing of the products.

Long-range studies at low-level irradiation will follow the studies of high-dosage irradiation. The goal of low-level irradiation is to reduce marketing losses and to improve the safety and quality of fruits, vegetables, and grains as well as poultry and other meat products.

The research program also includes studies on irradiation as an alternative to using nitrite in preserving meats such as bacon. Nitrite is used to prevent the formation of botulinum toxin, a potentially lethal food poison. However, the safety of nitrite has been questioned.

Another phase of the program is a study of irradiation for pest control in stored and imported grains and fruits.





**Regional  
Information  
Offices for  
FSQS and  
AMS**

MIDWEST: Herbert C. Jackson, Director  
Iowa, Ill., Ind., Mich., Minn.,  
Mo., Nebr., N.D., Ohio, S.D., Wis.

536 S. Clark St., Rm. 636  
Chicago, IL 60605  
Telephone: (312) 353-3631

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New York, NY 10007  
Telephone: (212) 264-1145

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- ☐ Public Health (PUH)  
☐ Other (MIS)

☒ CML